Switzerland's Haunted Château de Chillon

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Château de Chillon in Switzerland is said to house several menacing ghosts, including "The Break" and "The Man in Rags."

One of the main reasons why I joined the Army was to see the world. When I was stationed in Nurnberg, Germany, there were so many nearby countries to visit, and I was able to see these countries on cheap military discounts.

One of the places that was on my bucket list was to see the Château de Chillon in Switzerland. This gorgeous fortress, built on the island of Chillon, was built as a strategic military site since the time of the Romans. It was used as a Roman outpost, and in the 9th century, a Roman tower was built at the fortress.

The Romans knew the value of the fortress, because it overlooked the important Saint Bernard Pass, which could take you to Germany and France from the North and Italy to the South. Many battles were fought at this outpost.

While the fortress is beautiful to behold, it has a very dark past. Some of the residents who lived in the château included Thomas I of Savoy and Charles III of Savoy. At one point in history, it was used as a prison. And within the dungeons, there were many hangings of political foes.

In 1342, the area was inflicted with the Black Death, which came with widespread death. And in 1382, a very cruel and vicious tyrant lived at the fortress. His name was Sir Raoul de Monthenard, and he was nicknamed "The Breaker." He was so evil that he kidnapped a married woman named Erdelinde and discovered she had a baby with her husband. Monthenard was so furious that he threw the baby out of the chapel window into the lake below.

Erdelinde was in shock and jumped out of the chapel window to save the baby, but while doing so she dropped into the lake and drowned along with the baby. The deaths at the fortress didn't end there. On Sept. 26, 1613, 27 "witches" were executed there.

When I visited the château in 1975, I took a tour of the location. I learned about the history of the site, and I, of course, asked about the "haunts." According to the tour guide, he had heard screaming coming out of the fortress late at night.

Other locals have heard blood-curdling screaming from the site as well. Locals and tourists have claimed that they have seen Erdelinde's ghost walking near the lake and actually in the lake looking for her baby. The tour guide said he once heard a woman crying at the lake. When he went to the area where he heard the crying, it stopped and he couldn't find anyone the area.

Sir Raoul de Monthenard is sometimes seen roaming the hallways. A tourist became terrified when spotting Monthenard's ghost, because he had a maniacal look and warped evil smile on his face.

Locals and tourists have told the tour guide that they have been touched and heard strange whispers and heavy footsteps throughout the fortress. One female tourist claimed she was pushed into a wall, and a male tourist claimed his beard was yanked violently by an unseen force. Moaning has been heard in the dungeons, as well.

The tour guide said there was another ghost that he actually encountered, called "The Man in Rags." This spirit came out of a wall, and his clothes were literally in rags. The tour guide said the spirit had his mouth wide open with saliva dripping from it, and there was blood everywhere on his body. The tour guide said when he saw this apparition, he almost quit. The apparition appeared only once and for a short time. The tour guide said a maintenance worker once encountered The Man in Rags and quit his job immediately.

Inside the dungeons at Château de Chillon.

When I was walking around the fortress, I didn't run into any ghosts. But I did have a feeling of dread. I am not a psychic, but I felt the negativity in the air, as well as a depressive heaviness in various areas of the château. Toward the dungeon area, it felt extremely sad.

I felt relieved when the tour ended and I was finally back outside! ◆